

Colossians 2:16-23 Freedom in Christ Jesus

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)— according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Therefore

Because of Jesus' triumph through the cross for us
THEN



Therefore let no one pass judgment on you

There are critical people.

Don't let them affect you

Know the reasons for why you live as you do

Answer them if necessary.



2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Legalism

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

Issues facing the Colossians - with a Jewish flavour

Kosher – teetotal?
Festivals
Days



These are a shadow of the things to come,

They were temporary expressions of God's will

The point is clear: days and foods, as observed under the Mosaic Law, are not binding upon New Covenant people.

The shadow has passed, the reality has come. So for the Christian, *all* foods are pure (1 Timothy 4:4-5) and *all* days belong to God.

Christians are therefore free to keep a kosher diet or to observe the sabbath if they please. There is nothing wrong with those things. However, they cannot think that eating kosher or sabbath observance makes them any closer to God, and they cannot **judge** another brother or sister who does not observe such laws.



These are a shadow of the things to come,
but the substance belongs to Christ.

Shadow versus 'solid'

Fulfilled in Christ – your answer to 'judgement' by others

Feed on him

Celebrate his works and person

Live each day for him.

Enter his 'rest'.



Let no one disqualify you,
insisting on asceticism and worship of angels,

Disqualify – has more of a Greek flavour about it.

-divert from your course to rob you of your prize

They insist on 'something more'

Asceticism –false humility- a kind of monastic development ?

It is a negative view of life

Angelic mediators with God via material (sinful) world.

Worship only God. We have direct access through Jesus.

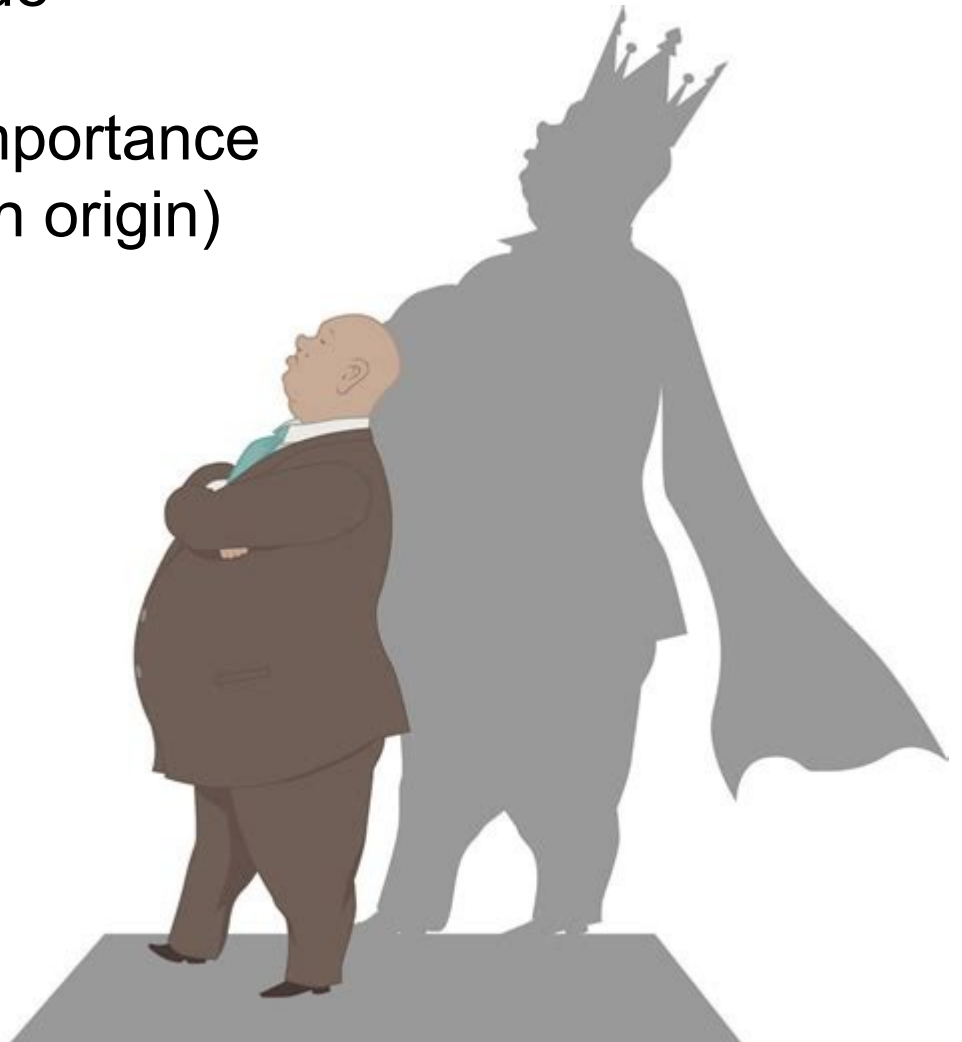
They are forms of idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

going on in detail about visions,
puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

This shows evidence of pride
“My experience – visions”
With an inflated sense of importance
It is sensuous (and human in origin)
rather than spiritual.

We don't need to take
on board these ideas.

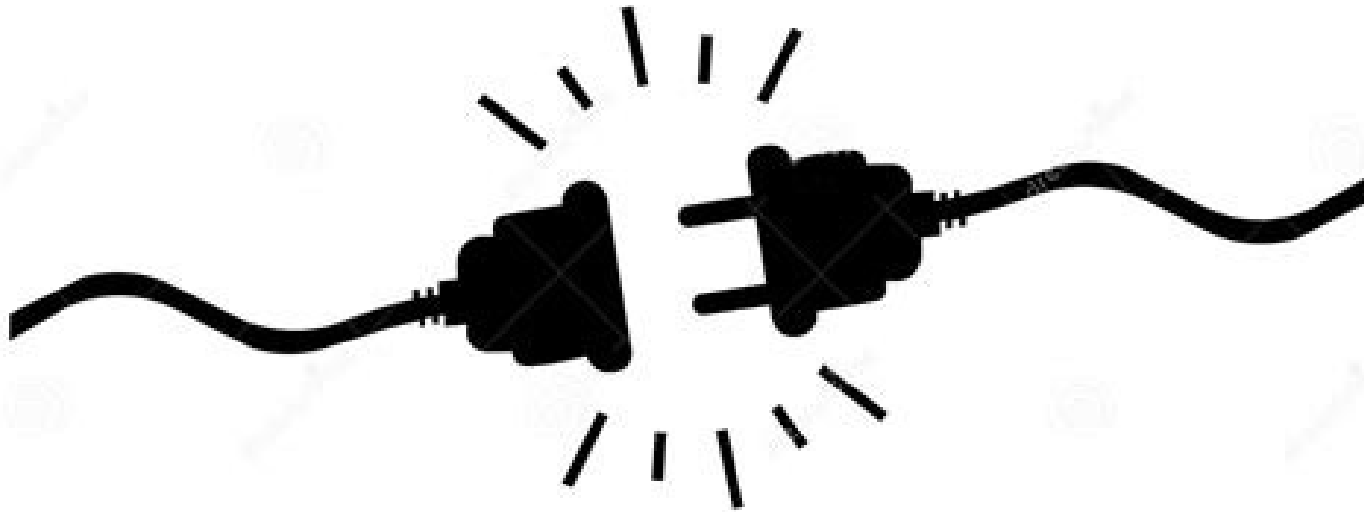


and not holding fast to the Head,

They have lost connection to the essentials.

'hold fast' also carries an idea of a covenant relationship too

It's all about him. The Lord – his headship



from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together
through its joints and ligaments,

Connected → in a real living relationship with him as a body
Flourishing, united, cooperating in its individual parts
What part do you play?



grows with a growth that is from God.

Godly growth?

In character, actions words and deeds, thoughts

Helping others to develop in the faith

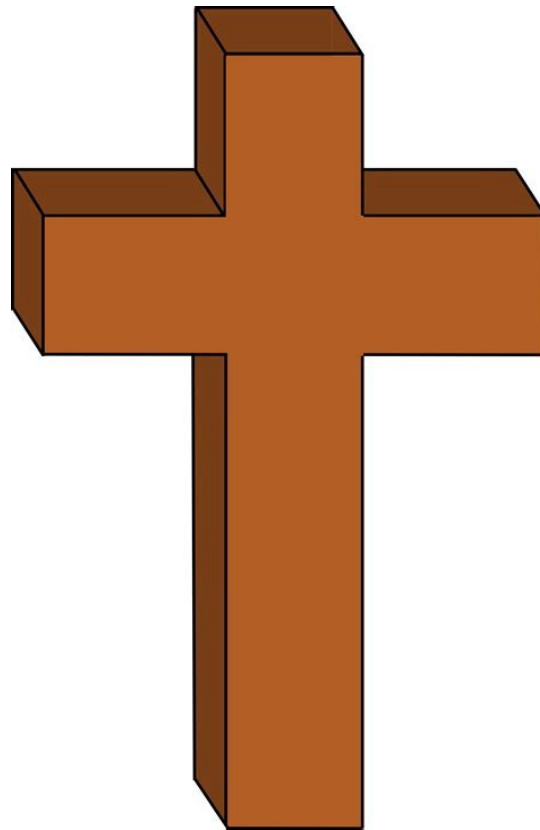
Numerical growth – more people saved

This God at work in us.



If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world,

Union with Jesus' death cuts us off from the control of
world powers – including demonic forces
So If = since this is true... THEN



why, as if you were still alive in the world,
do you submit to regulations—

Why let yourself be taken in and go along with their ideas and practices – rules

We are meant to be strangers and aliens in this world system

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,

2 Peter 3:13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”

Examples of their rules

No dealings with ...

Don't eat ...

Don't touch as if contaminated by them...



So how do we 'apply' the OT scripture teachings in the New Covenant life? Cf 1 Peter 1:14-16

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

(referring to things that all perish as they are used)

It's all temporary and it doesn't last.
What is the reality?



2 Corinthians 4:18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

according to human precepts and teachings?

Cf Isaiah's rebuke

Jesus with the Pharisees.

Rabbinic claims of 'traditions of the elders' oral law.

Going beyond and undermining God's word.

Isaiah 29:13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,



These have indeed an appearance of wisdom

The ideas seem to make sense and look good
but
deception only works when there are some similarities



in promoting self-made religion

The result of these additions make a new religion (rule based) and human in origin

Deuteronomy 27:5-6 And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. You shall wield no iron tool on them; you shall build an altar to the LORD your God of uncut stones. And you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God,



Cf John 4. Mt. Gerizim vs. Jerusalem

and asceticism and severity to the body,

Harsh treatment of body

Cf whips, fasts, a very restricted life

It gives an appearance of very devoted 'spirituality'

Cf the Baal prophets

1 Kings 18:27-28 And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.



but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

The rituals etc. don't work.

Sin isn't to be dealt with in this way

It only promotes pride, judgementalism, and feeds sin



Romans 8:13

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die,
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body,
you will live.*

We are not left to focus on negatives
– they are right and healthy warnings
but on what we are to be instead.

Colossians 3:1-2 *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*



**PROCEED
STRAIGHT AHEAD**

We are not left to focus on negatives
but on what we are to be instead.

Bear one another's burdens
Show love and care
Experience the joy of the Lord

to do list

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

*John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship
him must worship in spirit and truth.”*